

The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

Special points of interest:

- From the President
- Christmas Party
- November Meeting Minutes
- DX Contests
- From the President-Elect
- AG4W-K7RA Solar Update

From the President

For the last four years I've put words to the screen to fill this space. Each month an attempt to write something fresh, relevant, and informative. Some months are easier and some more difficult than others. This is proving to be the latter. Mark Twain is reported to have written "write what you know" and without realizing it I seemed to have followed that advice these last four years.

In addition to Club functional matters, I've written about my activities – participating in the year-long Centennial event, a Beverage antenna project, working and confirming Monk Apollo on CW, chasing DX, sometimes successfully sometimes not, a tornado near-miss, operating at K3LR, building a barn, Field Day planning & results, being a commercial rep at Dayton, and being a Hamfest rep at Orlando & Dayton. Each of us lives life and plays radio a bit differently and there's no one correct way. Along the way I hope you've enjoyed the tales shared here.

On **Monday**, December 11 at 6 PM, please join us for our Christmas dinner and our last meeting of the year at Logan's Roadhouse, 4249 Balmor-

al. We won't bore your spouse or significant other with too much radio stuff so ask her to join you. We will install our new officers and award the DX'er of the Year plaque.

I joked last month about the incoming president undoing legislation under my tenure but seriously, I have no doubt that Steve AG4W will bring a unique and interestingly different perspective to club leadership. I have a feeling too that our new Vice President Rob KB5EZ will soon have a schedule of interesting programs lined up.

I'm looking forward to the challenges of 2018 and want to thank the other officers, directors, newsletter publisher, and others for their past and future efforts in keeping this club running smoothly.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and 73,
Mark N4BCD
North Alabama DX Club – outgoing President
Huntsville Hamfest Chairman

How to Join

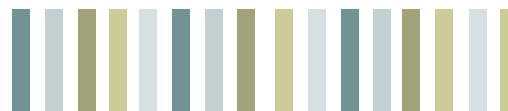
- * Come to a club meeting;
- * or send in an application by mail (form on www.NADXC.org)
- * or call
Tom Duncan at
(256)705-2147

December Program—Merry Christmas!

You read it above—this coming Monday (not Tuesday—beware!) is the NADXC Christmas Party at 6:00 pm at Logan's on Balmoral Drive off Airport.

In addition to fellowship with club members and the opportunity to share tales of ethereal conquest and adventure, we will award the DXer of the Year plaque based on your votes at the November meeting, and install our officers for the upcoming year. Don't miss it!





Members attending 20 Guests 1

Review of Sign-in Sheet & DX worked

Tom KG4CUY	VK9, 3C, 9U
Chuck N4NM	3C
Kevin KG4TEI	Yes! ZC4, D4C
Jim N4KH	3C1L, 9U, VK9
Bob K8KI	VP2MDL Montser-
	rat 80/160
	9U4M Burundi 40 CW
	& RTTY
	VK9MA Mellish Reef
	15/17/20
	5N7Q Nigeria 20
	KC4AAA Antarctica,
	op AI4LX from Madi-
	son, AL
	3C1L Equatorial Guin-
	ea 20/40
	3C0L Annobon 20/40
	VK9CZ Cocos Keeling
	20
AI W4ABW	3XY3D, 5H3DX,
	ZF9CW, VK9MA,
	9U4M, 3C1L,
	RI1ANU, 4U1A,
	ZD7FT, VK5CE/8
Lile K4NA	9U4M 160, VK9CZ
	LP80
Tom N4KG	3CDL 80m #335
	+3B, 3CIL 6B, VK9MA
	7B, 9U4M 6B,
	VP2MDL 9B, RI1ANU
	6B
Jerry K4SAV	3C0, 3C, VK9M,
	VK9C, VU7, 9U4, J5
Bruce AC4G	J5T, VK9M, VK9C,
	9U4, 3C0, 3C, 5N7Q,
	rec'd FK8CP 6m QSL
	card
Tim AB4B	J5T, VK9M, 9U4
Stephen KK4TJP	5T2AL
Mark N4BCD	9U4M 2 modes

Announcements

We welcome Walt AJ6T, 9 band DXCC, a new member!

Bruce AC4G had a write-up published in a recent K7RA Propagation Report.

The DX Club's Christmas Party date and venue have changed from years past. We will be at Logan's Roadhouse, 4249 Balmoral Drive, on Monday, December 11 at 6:00 p.m.

Mark N4BCD thanked the Club for the various gin pole offers. Four Huntsville Amateur Radio Club members used one provided by Craig K4XR for removing a tower that formerly belonged to KK4FDF SK. After a hard day's work only 45' of tower remains from what started as 75' of tower, 10 VHF antennas, and separate coax runs inside the tower.

2017 ARRL Field Day scores are out. K4BFT placed #1 again in the 4A category, which is the 5th first place finish in a row for the station!

Mark N4BCD pointed out that the Antarctica station KC4AAA that Bob K8KI logged is operated by AI4LX, whose QTH is in Madison, AL. The Club may contact him for a possible program in 2018.

Walt AJ6T recommended FT8 as a very good mode for obtaining DXCC.

Kelley W4VPZ Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance	\$ 4,172.77
Credits	
Hamfest Committee Donation	\$ 200.00
Ending Balance	\$ 4,372.77

Membership Applications

None.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Election of the DXer of the Year—to be awarded at the December meeting.

DXpedition funding and requests:

Robert N7QT requested funding Sept. 9 for VK9MA Mellish Reef, which is #28 on the Clublog most-wanted list. The DXpedition is currently operating.

Baker Island (KH1) is scheduled for June 2018. A funding request was received Oct. 25. By June 2018, the Baker and Howland Islands will be #3 on the most-wanted list.

YL2GM and YL3AIW's DXpedition to 3C1L (Bioko) and 3C0L (Annobon), in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea was mentioned. The DXpedition is already over, but was quite successful. Tom N4KG suggested we might consider sending some funding.

The Club voted to send \$500 in DXpedition funding in the following break-out:
\$300 to KH1 Baker Island
\$100 to 3C1
\$100 to be determined at a later date.

AI W4ABW announced that his antenna is working again, thanks to Dan K1TO's professional work with assistance from Kelley W4VPZ as the ground crew/human soldering stand.

Program:

While this solar cycle has laid waste to the high bands, 40m and below are still with us. Tom Russell N4KG reminded us that simple but effective antennas are possible to make without breaking the bank, which he demonstrated with some models and construction tips.



DX Contests for December

By Chuck Lewis, N4NM

ARRL Ten Meter Contest, (SSB & CW), 10 meters only

Dec. 9, 0000Z to Dec. 10, 2359Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus State/Province;
DX: RST + Ser. #

See page 73, Dec. QST and
www.arrl.org/10-meter

Russian 160 Meter Contest (CW/SSB) 160 meters

Dec. 15, 2000Z to 2400Z

Exchange: RS(T)+ Serial #; Russian
Stns: RST + Oblast

See page 73, Dec. QST and
www.qrz.ru/contest/detail/90.html

Croatian CW Contest, (CW), 160 – 10 meters

Dec. 16, 1400Z to Dec. 17 1400Z

Exchange: RST + SER. #

See page 73, Dec. QST and
www.9acw.org

OK DX RTTY Contest, (RTTY), 80 – 10 meters

Dec 16, 0000Z to Dec. 21, 2400Z

Exchange: RST plus CQ Zone

See page 73, Dec. QST and
www.crk.cz

RAC Winter Contest (CW & PHONE), 160-2 meters

Dec 30, 0000Z to 2400Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus Serial No.; VEs
send RS(T) plus Province

See page 73, Dec. QST and
www.rac.ca

Stew Perry Topband Distance Chal- lenge, (CW), 160 meters

Dec. 30, 1500Z to Dec. 31, 1500Z

Exchange: 4 Char. Grid square

See page 73, Dec. QST and
www.kknnet/stew

DARC Christmas Contest, (CW & SSB), 75/80 & 40 meters

Dec. 26, 0830Z to 1100Z

Exchange: RS(T) [+DOK or special
code for DL]

See page 73, Dec. QST or
www.darc.de/?id=820

Worldwide Iron Ham contest (CW, SSB, & DIG), 80-10 meters

Dec. 26, 1200Z to Dec. 27, 1200Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus CQ Zone

See: page 69, Dec. QST and
www.ironham.com.br/?page_id=22

RAEM Contest (CW), 80-10 meters

Dec. 24, 0000Z to 1200Z

Exchange: Serial # plus Lat/Long,
(e.g., 57N 85E)

See page 73, Dec. QST and
www.srr.ru/en/main

OTHERS

ARRL RTTY Roundup

1800Z, Jan 6 to 2400Z, Jan 7

EUCW 160m Contest,

2000Z- 2300Z, Jan 6; and 0400Z to
0700Z, Jan 7



Dates & times often change or are mis-
printed in the journals; beware.

See also: [http://
www.contestcalendar.com//
contestcal.html](http://www.contestcalendar.com//contestcal.html)

Chuck, N4NM

NADXC Officers and Directors

President	Mark Brown, N4BCD
Vice President	John Stensby, N5DF
Secretary/	Kelley Vann-Johns, W4VPZ
Treasurer	
At-large	Kevin Hibbs, KG4TEI
Directors	Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

The LongPath Staff

Publisher/Editor:

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Departments:

Chuck Lewis, N4NM, DX Contests

Kelley Vann-Johns, W4VPZ, Minutes

Mark Brown, N4BCD, From the President

November is always a fun month for DX'ing with the CQWW CW contest. It was good to see so many participate from the club and ACG. For many it is a great opportunity to get new band countries. For others it is a good chance to test new operating techniques or equipment improvements. I used it to try the new APF in the FTDX-5000. The original peaking filter was not that good, but with new firmware came new features. You definitely don't want to tune the band with it on, but it can make a big difference on 160 Meters in very noisy conditions. My score went up about 17 percent from last year, so I think it made a difference.

I just finished watching the video of ZF1MJ (N6MJ) doing dual CQs in the CQWW CW contest. The skill required to run dual CQ is amazing. To do it for many hours is incredible. Check it out on DX-World at <https://dx-world.net/zf2mj-n6mj-cqww-cw-2017-dual-cq/>.

I made 5 meteor scatter contacts on 6 meters using MSK144 during the Leonid meteor shower on November 17-18. I'm hooked. The next meteor shower is Geminid on Dec 14. I use 75 watts and a 4 element quad. It is exciting working MSK144 for meteor scatter contacts. Unlike EME contacts on JT65B that I don't hear most of the time, you can hear and see the ping from the meteor you have been waiting for. Some contacts take a while. That is all part of the fun.

I got the 2X13 2 Meter yagis aimed at the moon and worked EME station PA5Y recently. Look carefully and you can see the moon. It helped me determine I need to work more on my pre-amp.

As part of my Russian connection in the NADXC election I was caught not only purchasing a sequencer from UA3QLC, but also QSLs were recently sent directly to Stavropolskiy and Moskovskaya, Russia during the last month after the election. I hope the club doesn't call for a special prosecutor.



I also hope the club will consider bundling QSLs for the ARRL Outgoing QSL service. The new ARRL rates with a \$7 minimum service fee and \$1.15 per ounce highly discourages sending in a small number of cards. ARRL Affiliated Clubs may use the service to submit club QSLs for its members in bulk ("pooling" their members' cards together in one package) by indicating the club's name inside the package. Proof of membership should be enclosed for each ARRL member. I recently sent cards directly to the France, Japan, and Spain QSL bureaus. I recommend you bring your outgoing cards to the club meeting with a copy of your QST label showing your membership and \$3 per ounce of cards. We will need a club volunteer to collect the cards and send them when we have enough to make an economic mailing or every 3 months.

I enjoy the gift giving part of Christmas. Every year I try to surprise Mike, KF4BOG with something he would like for his ham shack. Last year's surprise was a D-Star radio. He has gotten a lot of use out of that and I even got to use his old Yaesu radio. This year I think he will be equally surprised. Of course, I had to let Santa know what I wanted. I hope each of you left detailed hints for Santa.

As we approach the end of the year I find it is a good time to set goals for the following year. I plan to discuss some potential goals for the club such as QSL forwarding at the January meeting. Be thinking about what you want to see the club do next year and give me some feedback.

73

Steve AG4W

AC4G-K7RA Solar Update

From The K7RA Solar Update, November 10, 2017

Bruce Smith, AC4G of Taft, Tennessee wrote: "In April 2013, I was so excited to hear and make a QSO with VK9CZ, Cocos Keeling on 80-meter CW as reported in the ARRL Propagation Report. The VK9CZ signal appeared suddenly out of nowhere with 579 signals at my sunset 2343Z via long path. Other stateside operators made the QSO including N4II who studied the technical aspects (science) and wrote a few articles on the path of the VK9CZ signal at grey line for April 2013.

"Recently, in Nov 2017, 4 years and 7 months later, VK9CZ put on another DXpedition to Cocos Keeling. To my surprise, I heard their signals once

Cont'd on p. 5

AC4G-K7RA Solar Update

(cont'd from p. 4)

again pop out of nowhere on 80 CW at my sunset (from 2235Z until 2325Z) early-November renewing my excitement. The signals long path (SE Beverage antenna) were surpassing 599. I could not pass another chance to say hello this year by giving the op on that side a 599-signal report. His sigs peaked via long path at 10dBs over S9 at my Taft, TN QTH this year Nov 2017. Perhaps Fall long path sigs are better than April sigs? There were several stateside hams who made the 1 November logs on 80 meters. The online log only showed about 36 QSOs in North America who had made the logs according to the Clublog statistics that I was monitoring.

"On 5 November, I could barely hear the VK9CZ signals long path via SE Beverage antenna. Since then, a few

other lucky operators logged an 80m QSO via LP with VK9CZ for a total of 71 80m QSOs as late as 6 November.

"November 6 was one of their last operating periods closing out their operation with another long path opening. The VK9CZ signals peaked via LP about 539 on this day in Taft, Tennessee. All other days not described above, there were no apparent signals being received at my location in southern Tennessee on 80 meters.

"My observations revealed one great long path opening at my sunset and one mediocre opening, while the other long path openings were nil to barely readable. As it was in 2013, both VK9CZ and my home were in sunlight for both QSOs taking advantage of another sunrise enhancement.

"I also monitored 160 meters on days no sigs were heard on 80 meters, but not a whisper from the VK9CZ 160 meter signals at my sunset on many days monitored, or when 160-meter cluster spots indicated VK9CZ operations on 160 meters.

"By the time the readers read this, the DXpedition will have ended. Hopefully, the next few years may bring other surprises on 80 and 160 meters for us all renewing the DX Spirit for all low band operators."

Merry Christmas

From the LongPath Staff

The LongPath staff wishes NADXC members everywhere a merry and blessed Christmas and begs their indulgence for the coming new year.

N4BCD's Multi-Op Station

At long last, Mark, N4BCD and XYL Julie, KK4CLG have completed their multi-multi station. Running on a low-protein, high-fiber diet, operators are kept in the seat for hours on end without complaint. From left to right see the bullpens for the 80m run station, the 160m mult station, and the 160m run station—the other bands continue to the right. These ops have been cooling their hooves for a few hours but will soon quit horsing around and relieve the boiled-owl graveyard shift just in time for the sunrise enhancement. These stations run only 3 dB below the legal limit at 746 watts, but a straw poll of nearby hams says they deliver more kick than any full 1500 watt/band station within a mile of the distillery.

After four years as president of the NADXC, we think of Mark as a DXer, but this foray into serious contesting prove he's no one-trick pony. "I've put a lot of thought, time, and money into this station" says Mark, "and I expect it to pay off in



terms of some really impressive wallpaper—I expect every CQ and ARRL contest winner plaque to adorn these walls in the

next few years."

And that ain't hay!